

## **Executive Summary of Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)**

### **Key Information about Bears Ears National Monument**

Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) consists of 1,351,849 acres in San Juan County, Utah, jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) (1.063 million acres managed by the BLM; 290,000 acres managed by the USFS). Located in southeast Utah's canyon country, BENM offers unparalleled recreation opportunities. The area is one of the most significant cultural landscapes in the United States, with thousands of archaeological sites and important areas of spiritual significance to American Indian tribes.

### **Summary of Public Engagement Prior to Designation**

The idea of a national monument in this area is not a new one: calls for protection of the Bears Ears area began more than 80 years ago. Six years ago, several tribes began working on a specific proposal to protect this area under the Antiquities Act. Last year, at the invitation of the tribes, senior representatives from DOI and the USFS attended an Inter-Tribal Council meeting in the field at the Bears Ears buttes to engage in government-to-government dialogue. In July 2016, Secretary Jewell was joined at a public meeting in Bluff, Utah, by Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Robert Bonnie, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Roberts, BLM Director Neil Kornze, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, and staff from the offices of Governor Herbert, Congressman Chaffetz, Congressman Bishop, Senator Lee, and Senator Hatch. At the meeting, an overflow crowd of over 1,500 citizens attended. The majority of speakers encouraged permanent protection for this iconic landscape, as did the majority of almost 600 written comments. On that trip, senior officials also met with a number of local stakeholders to discuss protection of the area, including a meeting with the San Juan County Commission that was well-attended by local citizens. The Governor, members of Utah's congressional delegation, and the San Juan County Commission support protection for the area, but unanimously opposed monument designation.

The boundary of BENM is largely congruent with similar designations in the Utah Public Lands Initiative (UPLI) (H.R. 5780), which was introduced by Representatives Bishop and Chaffetz after extensive consultations with stakeholders. Their UPLI, which Governor Herbert also supported, proposed to conserve roughly the same area as the BENM by designating two National Conservation Areas (Indian Creek and Bears Ears) as well as the Mancos Mesa Wilderness. The UPLI also proposed to designate most of the current Wilderness Study Areas as wilderness.

There is overwhelming support from tribal governments for protecting this important cultural landscape. A coalition of five federally recognized tribes – Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe of the Uinta Ouray – came together to develop a proposal for

protecting 1.9 million acres of public land in the Bears Ears area, which is the ancestral grounds of numerous tribes in the region and remains an important area for traditional and ceremonial use. Over two dozen other tribes endorsed their proposal, as well as the National Congress of American Indians. All seven tribes located in Utah and the Utah Tribal Leaders Association endorsed the proposal. The Navajo Nation, which has seven chapter houses located in Utah, has supported the proposal at its highest levels, including support from its President and the Navajo Nation Council. Six of their seven chapter houses in Utah support the monument proposal, and the one that has rescinded its support has instead advocated for protecting the area through the Public Lands Initiative. To reflect tribal expertise and traditional and historical knowledge, the monument proclamation established a Bears Ears Commission, which enable tribes to share information and advice with federal land managers.

### **Summary of National Monument Activities since Designation**

The BLM-Utah Monticello Field Office has identified a list of priority projects needed to improve visitor safety, protect resources, and enhance visitor experiences and have made significant progress in planning and implementation of these projects. The BLM-Utah has also developed informational materials including maps, brochures, and website materials. Design work for portal signs is also nearly complete. The Bears Ears Tribal Commission has been established, with representatives identified for each of the tribes noted in the proclamation. The BLM has participated in two in-person meetings with the Commission and have started to identify opportunities to work together. The BLM has coordinated with the USFS on day-to-day activities and initiated discussions regarding short- and long-term management needs. A coordination call is held between the agencies on a weekly basis to discuss ongoing action items, including responses to public inquiries. The BLM prepared a Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) Charter (signed by Secretary Jewell) and a Federal Register Notice calling for nominations to the MAC (not yet published).

### **Summary of Activities in Area for 5 years Preceding Pre-Designation**

These lands have been managed according to the 2008 Monticello Resource Management Plan, which includes multiple-use management objectives. Approximately 727,000 acres (68 percent) of the BLM lands that are within the monument are afforded a level of protection under the existing land use plan under other designations such as Wilderness Study Areas, natural areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, or Special Recreation Management Areas. There has been no change in day-to-day management since designation of BENM.

### **Summary of Available Economic Information since Designation**

A cursory review of mineral potential is included in the Drive folder.

### **Summary of Any Boundary Adjustments since Designation**

Not applicable. The proclamation establishing the BENM directed the Secretary to explore entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of Utah for the exchange of approximately 109,000 acres of state inholdings within BENM for BLM lands outside the monument. Further, the Secretary was ordered to report to the President by Jan. 19, 2017, regarding the potential for the exchange. In response, the BLM drafted an MOU for review by the Utah State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). SITLA has temporarily declined to participate in review of the MOU pending the outcome of the monument review under the executive order. The BLM anticipates that at the conclusion of the review process, SITLA will be receptive to dialog regarding exchange opportunities.